

OrganFax.co.uk Spotlight

# DIRKJAN RANZIEN



It's now some ten years since I first had the pleasure of meeting and indeed working with Dutch organ sensation 'Dirkjan Ranzijn'. I recently caught up with Dirk when we were both on the bill of the excellent and extremely well attended Eastbourne Music Festival. As ever, his smile and engaging personality were to the fore, but appearances aside, what of the background to this keyboard world sensation? Born in the town of Alkmaar, Holland in 1968, Dirk showed a very early interest in music being a frequent visitor to both the circus and theatre. His family are indeed 'show business orientated' with two cousins being professional musicians and an uncle having appeared in adverts, films and a number of plays on Dutch TV!

Having been tutored by leading Dutch organists Franz Oudhoff and Peter Rijs, he left school at eighteen to study for a diploma in acting and music. It is perhaps this 'stage school' experience, which would prove to be such a catalyst towards his modern day way of presentation.

His first touring instrument was a Technics, leading up to a Wersi Spectra and latterly a Bohm Diamond organ. It was during the latter's reign that he was approached by Bohm themselves to appear as a freelance demonstrator for the ground breaking German manufacturer. The team at that time (circa 1995) included the likes of Robert Bartha and Mark Shakespeare. Dirk recalls the shock of Mark's sad and most tragic passing and also the profound affect which this had on him.



*Dirk with the late, Mark Shakespeare.*

It is most obvious to any onlooker that Dirk continues to carry on some of the 'magic',

which Mark so enthusiastically brought with him to the stage....

Dirk's first concert abroad was in Poland, but in the space of a few short years he has become a regular visitor to the likes of Denmark, Switzerland, Germany, Italy & Belgium – not to mention the UK and Holland!

Dirk describes his allegiance to the Bohm Company as a 'gentleman's agreement' meaning that he will always choose to play this make on stage and his name has indeed become synonymous with the product.



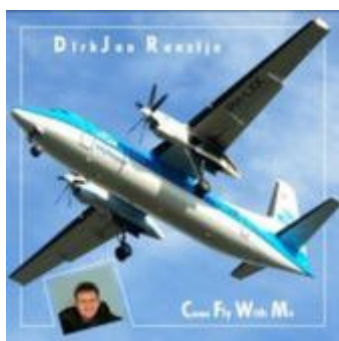
In a time when players are making more and more use of pre-recording and sequenced backing tracks, Dirk openly states that he prefers to create live music from 2 hands and feet and anyone watching him in action cannot fail to witness the sheer energy, enthusiasm and adrenalin coming to the fore during his concerts!

Music aside, Dirk loves to travel and we often talk of our

personal passion for all things 'aviation'!



A keen photographer, he is often to be found with his camera aside one of Amsterdam Schiphol's bustling runways ready to capture the action as it happens. In fact – his superb photo of a KLM Fokker 50 turboprop graces the front cover of his CD 'Come Fly With Me'!



Talking of CD's, it comes as no surprise that his library of CD and DVD recordings is prolific to say the least. His 2 DVD's featuring live recordings of concerts at the Bournemouth Pavillion have become record sellers and his easy listening albums encompass all manner

of concert favourites from classics through to pop.

Any first time listener to a Dirkjan Ranzijn concert will quickly become aware of how he cleverly manages to take traditional and perhaps 'nostalgic' songs and melodies and bring them right up to date with modern registrations and disco style drum patterns. This ingenious method of 'styling' surely serves to make his music more interesting to the younger generation whilst still pleasing the more 'traditional' stalwarts at the same time. His fresh and forward-thinking approach is certainly novel to say the least, but sets him aside somewhat from his contemporaries in doing so. Likewise, gone are any stuffy suits or bow ties, Dirk dresses as any young pop performer would choose to do and without a doubt brings a type of youthful exuberance to an art form which is surely in danger of being left in a time-warp without some sense of reinvention and regeneration.

Organ world aside, Dirk has an absolute passion for the wider world of show business and makes no secret of his love of such stars as Jane McDonald,



John Denver and Barbara Streisand.

I have often heard it said that the trouble with many keyboard artistes is that they play songs with little or no concept of either the lyrics or the story line, which go along with the melody. Dirk's love of the aforementioned vocalists can only help in such matters and comes across greatly in his arrangements.

In short, Dirk has clearly managed to set himself as one of Europe's premier concert performers with his audiences left spellbound by his dynamic and fresh approach to playing and presentation. As the title of one of his recent CD's suggests, Ranzijn was quite simply 'Born To Be On Stage'!



*Chris Powell, March 2009*  
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